L'ESPRIT DE OUABACHE

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

2006—2007

President's Report *John Gettinger, President*

The Commission has pushed our cultural mission in the past two years; has positioned the Corridor for this century's projected growth. Though history may reflect the immediate period as one of budgetary constriction, the volunteers of our corridor have buckled down to carry forward the work. Though those budget cuts have slowed the advance of physical additions, our shift to social and cultural projects has allowed us to advance our citizen's sense of place in Indiana. Allow me to list a few programs to illustrate this point.

A series of public meetings were held throughout the 475-mile Corridor leading to the **2004 Corridor Management Plan** for the Wabash River Heritage Corridor (updating the 1993 CMP). A master plan is crucial to pursue most federal and private grant funding.

The **Wabash River Water Trail** is on target for recreational use along the entire corridor after a series of grand opening events in the summer of 2006. Designed, prepared and presented with literally hundreds of volunteer hours for every purchased hour, annual **"Teach the Wabash River" Symposiums** provide instruction on Native American cultures, archeology, water analysis, biology, wildlife, and watershed restoration. It gets educators to incorporate the Wabash River into their classroom curriculum and has, in part, led to the "**Discover the River – A 4-H Exploration of the Wabash**" 4-H project. Finally, in cooperation with a number of non-profit organizations, the Commission sponsored the first **"De-Trash the Wabash" river clean-up** day in August, 2004. Those partners went on to conduct four more clean-up events in 2004, alone. The "De-Trash" highlights the public/private cooperation which has allowed us to advance our mission in low-budget times.

Our path ahead, though longer for the lack of the Corridor Fund, still seems bright & clear. The Wabash River Heritage **Corridor Brochure**, the second most popular tourist hand-out (behind the state map), is in its 3rd 100,000 printing. Wabash: Life On the Bright White River – a **30-minute, video documentary** - may be entertaining & teaching the heritage, environment and culture of the Wabash, on PBS TV and in classrooms, in 2006. Our office is equipped, we boast a full-time Executive Director and an all-volunteer River Commissioner staff. We maintain a commercial-quality **tabletop display,** a **website**, and produce both an **e-newsletter** ***Wabash Reflections*** as well as ***L'Esprit de Ouabache***. Our future programs will "make" Indiana—a cleaner river; less flooding; more recreation; a quality sense of place - a more attractive place to live. Still water runs deep – and if we can't be deep, at least we're causing a little stir!

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FROM A PEACEFUL STREAM TO A POWER PAWN

Paul McAfee, River Commissioner, Allen County

Stand for a moment by Ellison Road, part way down the hill on the Little Wabash River valley wall just south of US 24 in Allen County. Look around and reflect on what you see and hear. A plane is flying over to land at Ft. Wayne International. To your left there is busy traffic on I-69 coming and going. Above is a power line, its towers now occupying the bed of what was once the 'interurban' railroad. Beside that bed is a depression that once was the Wabash and Erie Canal.

If you are really acquainted with the history of this area, and you listen to your mind's ear, you might hear many voices from the past 350 years. For this valley's history speaks loudly; its language is that of transportation. And transportation represented power. The Miami Indians, the French, and the young Americans, all realized the importance of this valley and the power that it controlled. The story is a long one; the struggle for control was bitter and involved many peoples.

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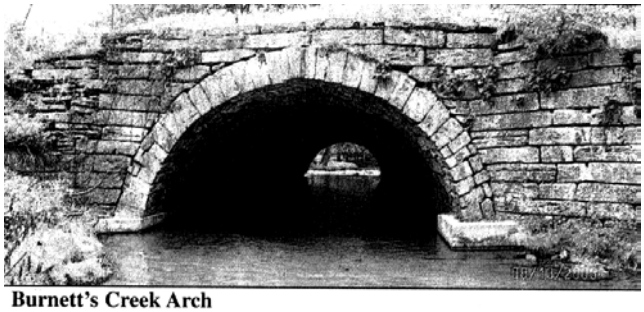
FORGOTTEN LOCK NO. 28 *Tom Castaldi, Historian*

For the last one hundred sixty years a workhorse of a canal lock has been passing its days in the shadow of Burnett's Creek Arch in Lockport, Indiana, on Towpath Road; recently established as the "Wabash & Erie Canal Trail" from Delphi to Georgetown in southwestern Cass County.

About the time it was being constructed, it may have witnessed the infamous 1837 "Trail of Death" that recalls the forced march of the Potawatomi people being removed to territories west of the Mississippi River. In 1839, the Chief Engineer in charge of building the canal reported that the line was nearly completed from the Ohio state line to Lafayette. It is generally acknowledged that the arch was built during 1839 and 1840 and the canal opened to Delphi in August of 1840. Stone for the arch was taken from Cass County France Park, known to canal officials as "Georgetown Quarry." When the canal closed in the mid 1870s, a wagon road replaced the canal route and was named the "Towpath Road." Burnett's Creek Arch has since been serving modern day traffic making it one of Indiana's great treasures.

Tucked in along the side of the road a few yards west of the arch, is a low stone wall that once was given an official designation of "Lock No. 28"



Burnett's Creek Arch

by the Chief Engineer of the Wabash & Erie Canal. Presently, Towpath Road passes over the north half of the arch and along the north side of the lock's stone wall. Although the old lock is not nearly in as good condition as the arch, it too has survived the decades.

When Delphi's Canal Interpretive Center commissioned an artist to create a mural depicting the Burnett's Creek Arch, since no photograph or written description is known to exist, several questions arose. Were the two one structure or two distinct units? What did this combination of stone and timber look like that could move an eighty feet long canal boat across Burnett's Creek and up and down the canal as the elevation changed?

It has long been recognized that a lifting lock was constructed west of the arch but exactly how the two interconnected has been lost. Lost in the sense that Burnett's Creek Arch was a viaduct built to carry the Wabash & Erie Canal over Burnett's Creek and, when the canal was abandoned years later, the old structure was paved over and turned into a county road. In 1847, Jesse Williams, was charged by the Trustees with describing the physical condition of the canal's structures along the 189 miles of canal built since 1832 from the Ohio state line to Coal Creek south of Covington, Indiana. He wrote about the arch: "Culvert No. 100, over Burnett's Creek, an arch of 20 feet chord, built of hammer-dressed stone – in good repair excepting the ring stone at each end, a part of which are of soft stone and are falling to pieces." It must have been an awesome sight as, according to measurements, the height of the towpath above the water level in the creek below was at least two stories.

To this day much of the arch is visible and, other than a modern cement cap to replace the south side of the old stone work, survives as a relic of the past. Although as a road bridge it has been slightly changed and improved throughout the years, it stands virtually the same as it did when it was built. Throughout the years, much of the towpath and virtually all the berm bank over the arch have been removed in its conversion to county road status. Interestingly, the south portion of the 86 feet long arch surface is covered with soil fill. Today the towpath over the arch is noticeable, but not as prominent as it is to the east and west of the arch. There seems to be plenty of space for a 40 feet wide, 4 feet deep canal to pass across the arch. The question remains as to what changes in width were made as it passed on to the entrance of the lock?

A soil probe indicates that today there is three feet of fill atop the arch and core samples reveal a layer of "puddle" that was laid in place to reduce seepage when water filled the canal's basin. Puddle was often a mixture of clay and gravel used

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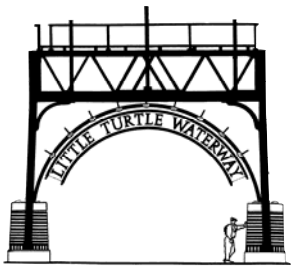
Notes Down The Corridor

Little Turtle Waterway Enhancements Complete

Enhancements for Logansport's Little Turtle Waterway Trail, supported by the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund, are complete. The five-block-long trail in downtown Logansport now has benches every 200', lights, more native trees, and stairway access to an overhead bridge.

Volunteers recently completed a terrace area with donated materials. The terraces, between the trail and the Wabash River, provide a resting area that is sunny and sheltered from north winds in winter and shaded in the summer.

Volunteers are well organized to continue maintenance work along the trail to eradicate invasive species so that the native plants can take over. The area looks more and more the way the painter George Winter described it when he moved to Logansport in the early 1800's.



Little Turtle Waterway has become a well-used downtown park. Annual events include a circus, a Christmas display of lighted parade

Progress Made on Monon Rail Bed Trail

Completion of brush-clearing work and the laying of fine crushed limestone (over the coarse rail bed stone) completed a significant section of this walking and biking trail on the abandoned Monon track right-of-way to the High Bridge over Deer Creek. The result is an additional two miles added to the eight miles of the Delphi Historic Trail system, much of which is along the Wabash & Erie Canal towpath which is also a section of the **WABASH HERITAGE CORRIDOR TRAIL**. The trail covers the two miles from Delphi City Park to the end of the property owned by the Canal Association; to a parking lot near the brick 1850s house of Sherry and Lois Mears. This house is within the Deer Creek Valley Rural Historic District. This Historic District is on the National Register of Historic Districts.

100% CHANCE OF CLOUDS *Louise Jewell, River Commissioner, Warren County*

A scene from High Bridge Country—

Some people say its a gray day like "oh gloom.. sigh, sigh" I say, Oh, let me go out and look!

This time of year from my observation point, a door of the sugar shack, (and where else would you find me this time of year) I see what seems at first glance to be a monotone of browns and grays. But the more I look, the more diversity and variety I see. From here I can see thousands of trees of all sizes and no two of them seem to be the same shade of gray. From the shaggy bark of a hickory to the sheen of a smooth beech the texture of each tree helps give that tree its own individual color of gray, which can range from almost white to almost black.

The stream down hill from me is also gray with differing shades where the water flows over sand, rocks, or fallen trees. Even the white caps of the rapids are a shade of gray because the sky is gray today. The huge V of hoarsely honking sandhill cranes flying against that gray sky is a darker gray. The smoke from the stack and the steam rising off the evaporator each have different shades of a misty, hazy, mysterious looking gray as they drift down over the dark brownish gray of the trail that meanders through the woods.

And the browns: Again at first glance, the leaves fallen and lying on the woods' floor just look like a monotone of brown --But when I look closer, I see that each leaf has different textures and shades of browns and that again no two leaves seem to be the same shade of brown and vary from glossy to matte depending on the weather. Multiply those few leaves by the billions (am I hyperbolizing? maybe, maybe not) of leaves lying in the woods visible from my vantage point, and how many shades of brown have we here. I can't begin to count them. I love the gossamer brown of the young beech trees that look like a winter flowering tree.

What an artist's palate are these shades of brown and gray.

An occasional spot of green from moss on the bottom edges of some trees and on a few rocks, along with a few evergreen ferns here and there or the darting red on the head of a "ha, ha, ha, ha,ha, ha, I'm Woody, the woodpecker" only serve to set off the beauty of the sepia toned landscape.

So, a gray day does not make me feel gray and gloomy. On the contrary, it just gives me a different way of enjoying the beauty of nature around us.

BATS OF THE WABASH

John O. Whitaker Jr., Professor

Excerpted for *Ouabache* by Editor

Indiana State University Center for North American Bat Research and Conservation, Department of Ecology and Organismal Biology

The change of seasons is an amazing time in Indiana. Whether the awakening of spring or the cloaking of fall, the seasons play a crucial role in providing habitat; the living circumstances of the wild creatures in our state. Likewise, seasonal changes in habitat or changes from other factors change the manner, or even the possibility, of life for those animals. We, as observers, do not always, some might say rarely, understand how we affect our wild neighbors – or how changes in wild populations will affect us. The bats of the lower Wabash River bottoms are a case in point.

Our ISU Center has studied the bats of Indiana for many years, including the bats of the lower Wabash. Along the Wabash we have netted numerous locations from Terre Haute south to the Ohio River. As part of the Wabash study, we netted in a large wooded area near Prairie Creek in the Wabash River bottoms in late July 1994, and captured 15 bats of 6 species. These woods include about 1600 acres; probably the largest wooded area along the lower Wabash. As southern Vigo County is particularly convenient at just 20 miles south of the ISU campus, this "find" led to much additional netting over the next few years. All nine species of bats expected were found, making this one of the best areas in Indiana for bats.

Twelve species of bats are or were known from Indiana. Of these, the Southeastern myotis is probably extirpated from the state. Another, Rafinesque's big eared bat is a very rare visitor from Kentucky. The Gray bat, federally listed as endangered, occupies only one known colony in Indiana, along the Ohio River in Clark County, just north of Louisville. The remaining nine species may be found in wooded areas along the Wabash River in the southwest part of the state, though the Silver-haired bat only migrates through. It does not have young within Indiana. The other eight species all produce young in the southern Wabash bottoms.

Different bat species have very different behaviors. The Red bat is common, the Hoary bat is not, but both are solitary species that, like the Silver-haired, make long migrations; south in fall, north in spring. Both these species hang among the foliage where they have their young. The Big brown bat and Little brown myotis have adapted to humans by normally making homes in buildings, but both occur in the Wabash corridor at times. We have found a Little brown myotis colony under the sloughing bark of a tree in the bottoms, perhaps reverting in these large woods to its ancestral maternity habitat. Also, in southern Vigo County, Big brown bats live in buildings in the town of Prairie Creek in early summer, but in late summer form post-lactating colonies under slabs of bark in woods about 3 miles north of town. This is probably easier than flying the three miles home every night once the young are independent. The Northern myotis roosts in small colonies in trees, in cavities or cracks or under slabs of bark. The Indiana myotis roosts under sloughing bark in fairly large trees (generally over 20" diameter breast height) but the bark needs to be heated by sun for the babies to maintain proper growth. We have captured hundreds of bats in the lower Wabash especially in the Prairie Creek area, and have learned much about all. All of the bats were released unharmed.

Two species about which we have learned an especially great amount during our studies at Prairie Creek are the Eastern pipistrelle (Indiana's smallest bat) and the Evening bat (a state endangered species) and both bits of learning involved their colonial habits.

One of my students, Jacques Veilleux, found that most of the Eastern pipistrelles surprisingly form their maternity colonies in clusters of leaves, usually dead ones. Since some Pipistrelles form their maternity colonies in buildings, we had hypothesized that they would form colonies in hollows in trees. Evening bats also had adapted to buildings. Indeed, all of the Evening bats found in Indiana through 1993 formed their maternity colonies in buildings. However, no evening bats were known in the state in early 1994. All the former colonies were gone, and we were afraid the species had been extirpated from the state. However, the netting over lower Prairie Creek on 25 July 1994 included six evening bats, and subsequent netting indicated that the evening bat was the most abundant bat at Prairie Creek. Using tiny radios glued to their backs, we tracked the Evening bats to hollows in trees. All Evening bats tracked to maternity colonies since 1994 have colonized trees. We suspect the larger Big Brown bat may be out-competing the Evening bat for roosts in buildings.

Bats, or some of them, are active in the lower Wabash bottoms during warm weather and it is possible that some bats hibernate there. Presumably the Red, Hoary and Silver-haired bats, or most of them are far to the south in winter. The Little brown, Indiana, and northern myotis, eastern pipistrelle, and a few of the Big brown bats move to caves and mines where they hibernate (Most Big brown bats in Indiana hibernate in buildings). Little is known of evening bat hibernation but our present hypothesis is that the evening bats move further south in the Wabash bottoms where they hibernate in trees.

The conclusion is not hard to reach, that any changes in the type or amount of forest will have a marked affect on the ability of Indiana to maintain its current bat population. As we continue to "develop" our landscape, it is clear that changes must be carefully planned if we are to preserve a sustainable place for nature and its creatures. Sometimes misunderstood, insectivorous bats are an important part of our world, helping to maintain nature's balance by being a predator on night flying insects. Our developments may not affect the change of seasons but they can, and often do, affect changes in habitat. Without planning, species such as the mosquito may have less to fear in our night skies.

Circus Heritage Adds To Performance Pedigree in Peru

Kenneth Einselen, River Commissioner, Miami County

"Ladies and gentlemen, focus your attention above the center ring. . . " these words, ringing loud and clear from the circus ringmaster, draw your attention to the flying trapeze, the final act of the Circus City Festival held the third full week of July in Peru, Indiana. This three ring circus is the culmination of months of preparation by over 200 community performers ages 7 to 21. Peru, Indiana has been the winter circus quarters for a half-dozen different circuses over the years and the annual Circus City Festival relives the activity and thrills of those days gone by with performances every night of circus week and a parade and two performances on Saturday. The museum at the circus building is open year-round.

The International Circus Hall of Fame is located east of Peru off Sate Road 124 at the historic winter quarters on Circus Lane. The Hall of Fame has many historic vehicles and wagons from circuses around the world. The circus heritage of Peru began before the turn of the century with "Colonel Wallace" obtaining many circus animals in payment for an outstanding feed bill in 1883. Wallace purchased the Carl Haganbeck Circus in 1907. Thus began the rich circus heritage for Peru and Miami County that also includes the Sell-Floto Circus and Tom Mix Circus.

Cole Porter, born in Peru, Indiana in 1891, has contributed to the history of Peru and also to the culture of the world as the composer of many songs for Broadway musicals and Hollywood movies. Cole Porter is remembered with a festival the second weekend in June. Cole Porter's personal 1955 Cadillac sedan is on exhibit in the Miami County Museum. This vehicle was restored and given to the museum for display. This exhibit does not have the only Hollywood connection for the museum. There is also a stagecoach used by Tom Mix: cowboy, circus owner, movie star and millionaire. Tom Mix made his way to Peru, Indiana with a circus and became a circus owner in 1933. Tom Mix made his last movie in 1935 and the Tom Mix Circus folded in 1938. Mr. Mix died as a result of an automobile crash in 1940.

Cole Porter was not the only musical performer to be born in Peru. John Olsen, born in 1892, later took the name of his brother Ole. He teamed up with Chick Johnson to produce a straight musical act following "Ole's" vaudeville experience. Their first full musical, HELLZAPOPPIN', played in New York over 1,400 times and they were among the first comedians to appear on television. Ole Olsen died in January 1963 with the Ole Olsen Memorial Theater group forming the following year. The Ole Olsen Memorial Theater group stages several productions every year and utilizes the restored Peru Depot for most of their performances.

The Depot was restored as a community effort and has become the focal point of the southern entrance to downtown Peru. The Peru Riverwalk and Miamisfort are two of the other community efforts showcasing the Wabash River in Peru, Indiana. Miamisfort is one of the many projects of the Wabash River Heritage Corridor Fund. Miamisfort was designed over several months using community input and constructed in four days of intense volunteer effort.

August brings the people of Miami County, and from throughout Indiana, together for the annual Heritage Days. Celebrating the rich Native American heritage of Miami County and the pioneer spirit that contributed to the success of this community, Heritage Days is an opportunity to experience the many skills and traditions of our forefathers. Heritage Days is held at the Miami County fairgrounds north of Peru on the fourth weekend of August.

Come visit Peru and Miami County to share part of our rich heritage. You may contact the Peru/Miami County Chamber of Commerce 765-472-1923 or the Miami County Museum 765-473-9183 for more information on these and many other events here along the banks of the Wabash.

Peaceful Stream to Power Pawn, *continued from page 1*

For millennia, the Little River was a peaceful stream, originating in the area directly west of an Indian village, *Kekionga*. Sometimes it was quite small, almost dry. But, in spring and fall, the stream carried volumes of water through a grassy, marsh prairie, containing many varieties of wildlife including beaver. In the last four hundred years, this Maumee-Wabash sluiceway became more important, and a lot less peaceful. The valley connected the most direct waterways from Quebec and Montreal to French settlements along the lower Wabash, Illinois and Mississippi rivers; new areas, rich in game. Being farther south, the route was preferred as more temperate than the portages in Canada and Wisconsin. The relatively short winters, and plentiful beaver, made this portage the center of the coming tempest.

THE LITTLE RIVER

By the middle 1600's, France and England were both eager for trade in the New World. England was bent on establishing colonies, and both were desirous of pelts to supply Europe's popular demand for beaver felt hats. At that time, the Iroquois had extended their empire to the western Great Lakes and driven the Miami to the west and north. French voyageurs were limited to northern portages to access southern settlements. With French backing, the Miami Indians began driving the Iroquois back, reasserting control over the hunting grounds at the Wabash headwaters.

French claim to the western Great Lakes area was based on the travels of a number of explorers. By 1680, LaSalle had explored the northern Indiana area. Though unconfirmed, LaSalle had probably traversed the Maumee-Wabash Portage, the nine mile carry between the head of the Maumee and *Riviere Petite*, the Little's French name. The cordon of French control was now ever closer to English garrisons and colonies.

By 1727, the Wabash portage had become the principal route to the interior. During these times the voyageurs and *coureurs des bois* moved their trade goods through Ft. Pontchartrain (Detroit) and Kekionga. French colonization, however, was slow, and their garrisons poorly manned. The few huts surrounded by a stockade, Ft. Miamis, located on the St. Mary's River near Kekionga, later called Ft. St. Phillipe, was destroyed by Indians in 1747. In 1750 a new French fort was built a short distance upstream. These were the first of five forts placed to control the Maumee-Wabash portage.

FROM FRENCH TO AMERICAN

By 1760, the English had effectively defeated the French. English colonization of the interior, however, was also slow and, with the American revolution, England's hold on the "New World" began to slip.

In 1796, at the Treaty of Greenville, after the defeat at the hands of Gen. Anthony Wayne, Little Turtle, the Miami war chief who had previously defeated three armies, ceded the portage to the Americans. In an impassioned speech, noted as exemplary of Indian oratory, calling it the "Glorious Gate," he petitioned for joint control of the portage, but to no avail (control included revenue and, at times, revenue for portaging goods reached $100 per day). Wayne secured for United States control a large area at the three rivers, encompassing Kekionga, as well as the western portage landing.

TRANSPORTATION EVOLVES

In dry times, travelers might have to traverse *la longue portage*, the entire 24 miles or so to the forks of the Wabash at Huntington. However, in very wet periods it was often possible to pass through the Maumee-Wabash sluiceway without once having to leave one's canoe or *bateaux*. Normally the portage stretched from the bayou marsh on the St. Mary's along high ground to the Little River near its intersection with present I-69. This area was nearly always flooded by a beaver dam. The value of this flooding to ease of travel was widely recognized so, by common agreement, these beavers were left untrapped.

The portage continued to be used until the Wabash and Erie Canal opened to Huntington in 1835. While the Wabash and Erie, riding the canal-building crest fueled by canal success in Europe, was not completed to the Ohio until 1853, heavy debts and the railroads closed it by 1874. Today one can still see portions of the canal bed along the north edge of the sluiceway and remnants of a feeder stream aqueduct are still visible at Aboite Creek.

During the 1930's still another mode of transportation made use of the canal towpath. "Interurban" electric cars transported passengers between Ft. Wayne, Huntington and points west. These then gave way to the automobile. State Route 24 now rides the valley wall with the transportation history of the valley reduced to little more than periodic overlooks.

A REMINISCENCE

Efforts to drain the swampy prairie began in the 1870's as the bottom land seemed desirable for agriculture. Several enterprises failed but, by 1888, the "Great Marsh" of 25,000 acres was ditched and drained. The Little River valley now is an agricultural area prone to flooding and bearing little resemblance to the wetland prairie teeming with wildlife that was left by the glacier; little witness to its important role in the growth of the United States.

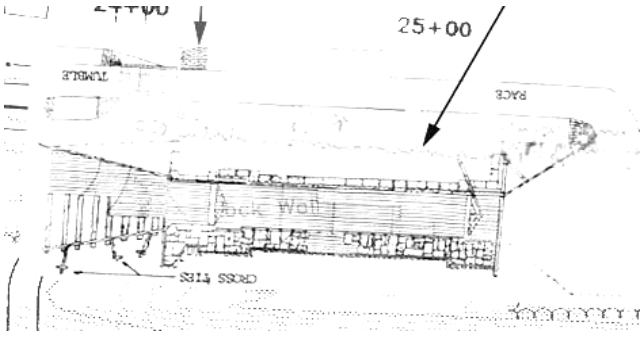
As one stands here beside Ellison Road, partway down the hill from the State Police Post, now perhaps you can hear some of the voices, the chants of the voyageurs, the rattle of musket fire and the braying of mules as they pull the canal boats. Wouldn't it be wonderful though, if once again we could hear the sharp bark of the fox, the slap of the beaver tail in the water and the mating call of the ducks in this valley?

Forgotten Lock No. 28, *continued from page 2*

to make the canal bed watertight. Wetted down, the mixture was packed with the hooves of cattle or iron rods until the air pockets were forced out of the mixture. Dennis K. McDaniel, director of the Peale Museum, who studied the arch, wrote that a minimum of two feet of puddle was used between the top of the arch stones and the bottom to the canal bed.

From the center of the arch it is one hundred and forty feet to the upstream lock gates. Here a long wall of rough cut stone has served as a reminder of the original lock. Other than a few scattered stones found here and there, underbrush conceals the old chamber and whatever may be buried in the towpath.

In 1847, Jesse Williams, observed: "Lock No. 28, 10 feet lift, built upon the *combined plan* the plank facing renewed last winter – the gates also new." Lock 28 raised and lowered boats ten feet utilizing a "combined" or "composite" design. That means that instead of a lock made entirely of wood or of stone, it was a combination of the two. As such, roughly cut stones, which took much less labor to form, were set in place, however, space was planned to permit a facing of tightly fitted timbers in structure's chamber to render it water tight.



To support this supposition, definitions of "combined" and "composite" designs were re-examined. A "Combined Lock" is said to be: "Two locks constructed parallel to each other and close together. One lock is used for canal boats ascending and the other for boats descending." No place in the Chief Engineer's reporting or in local histories has this lock been described as such. It would have been a most unusual construction on the Wabash & Erie and worthy of notice. To better express Lock No. 28 the definition of a "Composite Lock" may be more suited**:** "An inexpensive lock constructed of dry stone or mortared walls made watertight by nailing thick wooden planks horizontally to vertical timbers (studs) bolted to the masonry wall. Each wall was then covered with a sheathing of vertical planks nailed closely together. To prolong the life of the lock, 'kyanized' wood was sometimes used. Some masonry was used in the gate recess area." To "kyanize" was to treat wood with a solution of mercuric chloride to inhibit decay; an invention that predated 1850. Peter Bishop and John Hanna obtained a contract to clear the land for the canal right-of-way east of Lockport, and a contractor by the name of Munson built both locks numbers 28 and 29. A Mr. Fitch forged the iron parts used on the locks between Logansport and Delphi.

Great Lakes May "Net" Wabash Water

Public meetings were held in 2005 to consider the 2001 "Annex Implementing Agreement" revision to the Great Lakes Water Compact. The agenda included the use of out-of-basin water (water taken from other basins but drained into the natural Great Lakes watershed). Two issues discussed may apply to the Wabash River.

First, well withdrawals from aquifers several hundred feet underground are considered "in basin" as long as the surface well is inside the Great Lakes basin, based on surface drainage divides. Setting basin boundaries based on three dimensions, to include recharge and discharge zones, is beyond science's current capability. No boundary change mechanism is contained in the Compact. This may be crucial as aquifers are being drained faster than they fill and surface water use in the future is projected to reach 100%, requiring a shift to permit-based withdrawals rather than the riparian system we have currently (i.e. more like the western U.S.).

Second, surface-divide straddling communities, such as the City of Fort Wayne, want to "net" their use so that they can take Wabash basin water and add it to their Great Lakes basin outflow. This would permit them to avoid otherwise required water conservation measures. They urged unregulated "netting" for both existing and new infra-structure as these local governments were in the best position to apply a cost/benefit analysis to where water & sewer should flow. The Annex does not consider the cost to neighboring watersheds, either in water loss or reactive regulations, arising from local control of the analysis. - Ron James

Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission

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2006 - 2007 Issue

Address correction requested

Wabash Corridor Events

Riverside Skating Center Ice skating rink open November until late March, weather permitting. West Lafayette, 800-872-6648

Headwaters Park Ice Skating cold weather, November to March, Fort Wayne Headwaters Park

Mountain Man Rendezvous Fourth weekend in April, Bridgeton, 765-548-2136

Heritage Week Late April, Atheneum/Visitors Center Grounds, New Harmony, 812-682-4488

Spirit of Vincennes Rendezvous Next to last weekend in May, George Rogers Clark NHP, 812-882-1776

Merom Bluff Chautauqua First full weekend in June, Merom, Bluff Park, 812-356-4068

Canal Days early July, Delphi, Canal Park, 765-564-6572, wabashanderiecanal.org

Wabash Riverfest mid-July, West Lafayette, 765-447-9999

Three Rivers Festival 9 days, mid-July, Fort Wayne, multiple venues including Fox Island County Park, the Portage and the Old Fort. 260-426-5556

Wabash Herb Festival mid-August, Wabash, Paradise Spring Park, 260-563-5153

Miami Heritage Days Fourth weekend in August, Peru

Potawatomi Festival 3rd weekend in September, Attica, Ouibache Park, 765-764-4515

Forks of the Wabash Pioneer Festival 4th full weekend in September, Huntington, Hier's Park, 260-359-8937, pioneerfest.huntingtoncounty.org 800-848-4282

Feast of the Hunters' Moon A weekend in September or early October, Fort Ouiatenon, West Lafayette, 765-476-8402, feastinfo@tcha.mus.in.us

Johnny Appleseed Festival Embrace the sights, sounds, smells, and flavors of the early 1800's. Third weekend in September, Fort Wayne's Archer Park, 260-427-6003

Chief Logan's Port of Living History First weekend in October, Logansport, France Park

Munster at Wabash Bluffs Late October, Fort Knox II Historical Site, Vincennes, 812-882-7422

For more information please visit www.EnjoyIndiana.com

The Wabash River Heritage Corridor Commission meetings are held in odd months on the second Wednesday beginning at 1:00 p.m. Though locations are tentative, traditionally the meetings in November, January and March are held in the Indiana Govt. Center conference rooms while the meetings in May, July and September are held along the Corridor. Call 765-427-1505 to confirm the location for the next meeting or to be placed on the meeting mailing list!